

CLARK COUNTY

**VETERANS ASSISTANCE
FUND**

ANNUAL REPORT

2010



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Veterans Assistance Fund

The Clark County Veterans Assistance Fund (VAF) provides assistance to indigent veterans and their families. The use of the fund was developed in accordance with Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 73.08 and Clark County Ordinance Title 2 Administration and Personnel Chapter 2.29 Veterans Relief.

Washington State law established the Veterans Assistance Fund as a steady source of tax dollars to be utilized for the needs of indigent veterans and their families. A portion of property tax collected in Clark County is earmarked for the VAF.

Contracting for the use of the VAF is the responsibility of Clark County through the Community Services Department with advice from the Veterans Resource Committee. Clark County Board of Commissioners has statutory oversight for the use and expenditures of the fund.

The County, with the assistance from the Veterans Resource Committee, selects contract agencies through the County's procurement process once every three years. The County is responsible for all contracts, invoices, monitoring and reporting for these funds.

Direct emergency assistance is currently provided to veterans through this fund by Columbia River Mental Health, the contractor selected through a Request for Proposal process in 2010.

Veterans must meet certain eligibility requirements to receive assistance through the Veterans Assistance Fund. Assistance is provided without discrimination and in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, rules, and ordinances.

The Veterans Assistance Fund is currently used to provide the following emergency relief to qualified Veterans:

- Rent Assistance
- Heating and Utilities
- Food Assistance
- Transportation
- Prescription Coverage
- Burial Assistance
- Clothing, Tools and Licensing
- Auto Repair
- Eye Care
- Dental Care
- Referral Services

Veterans Resource Committee

The primary purpose of the Veterans Resource Committee (VRC) is to serve as an advisory board on veterans needs, and develop programs or procedures for the welfare of indigent and suffering veterans. The VRC also promotes awareness of these issues throughout the Clark County veterans community and provides policy guidance and advice to the Clark County Veterans Case Manager when necessary.

The committee meets monthly and consists of nationally recognized veterans organizations in Clark County and veterans from the community at large. The majority of the members must be representatives from service organizations; however veterans may join as a Member-At-Large if voted in by the committee.

The Executive Committee for 2010 was comprised of Morris Giesler – Chair, Michael Gibson – Vice-Chair and Robert Nichols – Secretary. Executive members may be re-elected to their position for two consecutive years.

Active members of the Veterans Resource Committee in 2010 included:

POST

40 et 8
American Legion #14
American Legion #122
American Legion #168
American Legion #176
American Legion #189
American Legion #208
DAV Chapter #4
Marine Corps League #826
VFW #1927
VFW #4278
VFW #12028
Vietnam Vets #512

PRIMARY

Morris Giesler
Karla Bean
Richard Puttkamer
Robert Nichols
Michael Gibson
Clinton Nelson
Brad Hunt
Bruce Maas
Lou Baste
Jim Chisholm
Stephen Stetson
Ray Saranto
Greg Whitson

SECONDARY

Jan Wojciechowski
Peggy Sheehan
Michael Edwards
Mark Woods
Philip Yasson
Charlotte Elznic
Robert Blevens
Michael Riley
Ron Brandon
Eino Suomi
Robert Hitchcock
Bill Romine
Jerry Keen

Members at Large

Thomas Dombeck
Kevin Lawson
Bill Allman
Sally Garcia

Services Provided

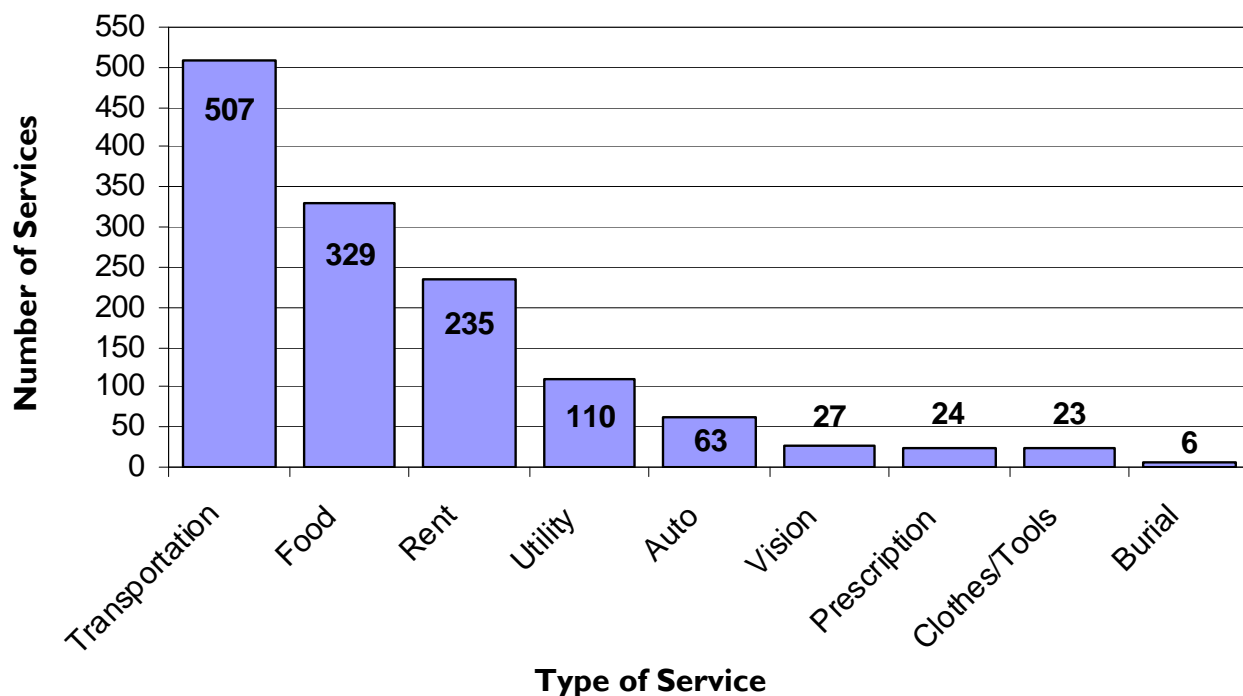
The Veterans Assistance Fund provides many different emergency services to veterans that meet certain eligibility requirements:

To be eligible for services, a veteran must:

- have an honorable discharge status,
- provide documentation showing the household income does not exceed 150% of the annual federal poverty limit, and
- provide proof of current residency in Clark County as well as proof of residency in Washington State for the previous 12 consecutive months

If a veteran does not meet these qualifications, they will receive referrals to other programs in the community.

Services Provided in 2010 (Duplicated)



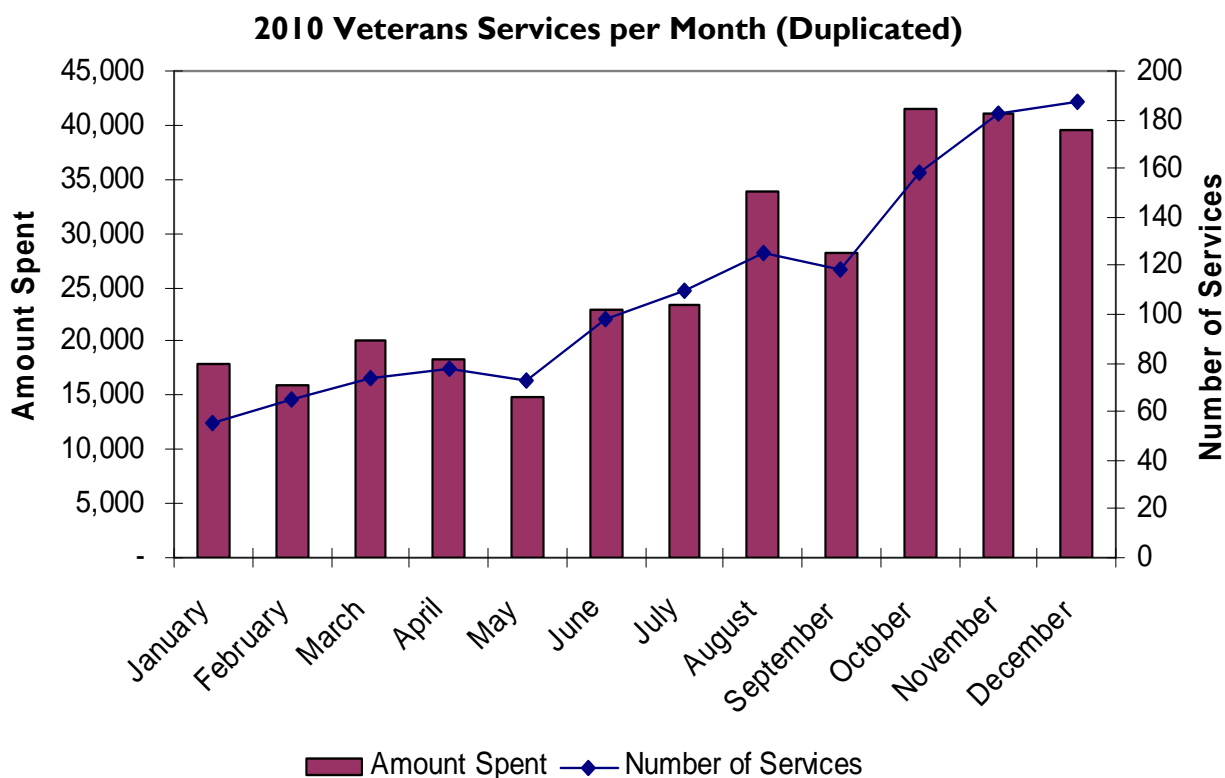
In 2010, the Veterans Resource Committee approved two new services for veterans through the Veterans Service Officer: eye care and hygiene items. These additions were greatly appreciated by veterans who were unable to acquire these resources elsewhere.

Funding and Demand for Services

The Veterans Assistance Fund receives funding through the County's property taxes. Although the annual amount fluctuates depending on the amount of property taxes collected, the average allocation over the last three years has been just under \$340,000 per year. **In 2010, Columbia River Mental Health provided \$317,626 directly to veterans in emergency relief.**

Clark County has seen an increasing need for emergency services in the veterans community over the past year. The Service Officer reports seeing approximately 10 to 15 new veterans each month who have never before had to ask for emergency assistance. Like many citizens in the county, veterans are facing reduced work hours or unemployment.

In the month of January 2010, the Veterans Assistance Fund assisted 55 veterans with various services. By the month of December, the number of veterans receiving services jumped to 187. Below is a chart showing the monthly number of veterans served, as well as the cost of those services.



Veteran's Assistance Fund – Fund 1019

	<u>Total</u>
Fund Balance as of January 1, 2010	1,025,897.83
Revenue:	
Tax Revenues	348,798.68
Miscellaneous Revenue	7,297.67
Interest and F M Adjustment	5,191.59
Total Revenue	361,287.94
Expense:	
Salaries:	
Program Staff	30,853.65
Finance	6,250.46
Contracts	3,539.98
Operating Expenses	15,644.85
Columbia River Mental Health Services	373,684.96
Veterans Stand Down	7,370.46
Total Expenses	437,344.36
Net Increase / (Decrease)	(76,056.42)
Fund Balance as of December 31, 2010	949,841.41

2010 Event – Project Homeless Connect

Council for the Homeless came to the Veterans Resource Committee in March to request funding assistance with the annual Project Homeless Connect. Because of the large number of homeless veterans in Clark County, the VRC determined this would be a good use of the Veterans Assistance Fund.

Project Homeless Connect helps connect persons who are homeless to resources that are available in the community. On March 29, 2010 the event was held at Red Lion at the Quay from 1000 to 1400 hours.

Services offered include medical, dental and eye exams, legal advice, haircuts, bicycle repair, wheelchair repair and animal care along with information about employment, housing and tax refunds. DSHS, Veterans Affairs, SeaMar, Community Services Northwest and Clark County Public Health were some of the many vendors that were on-site to provide services and information. **This year, 222 individuals attended Project Homeless Connect, including 25 veterans.** The total cost of the event was \$1,275.50. Assistance was provided by 24 volunteers, who helped run the event from set-up to clean-up.



2010 Event –Traveling Vietnam Wall

In August, the Veterans Assistance Fund assisted in bringing the American Veterans Traveling Tribute, an 8' by 380' replica of the Vietnam Memorial Wall, to La Center. The four day event included a motorcycle escort into town, ceremonies each day and supplies for visitors to trace names from the wall.



There were over 100 volunteers to help the 20,000+ visitors that attended the event between August 4 and August 8, 2010.

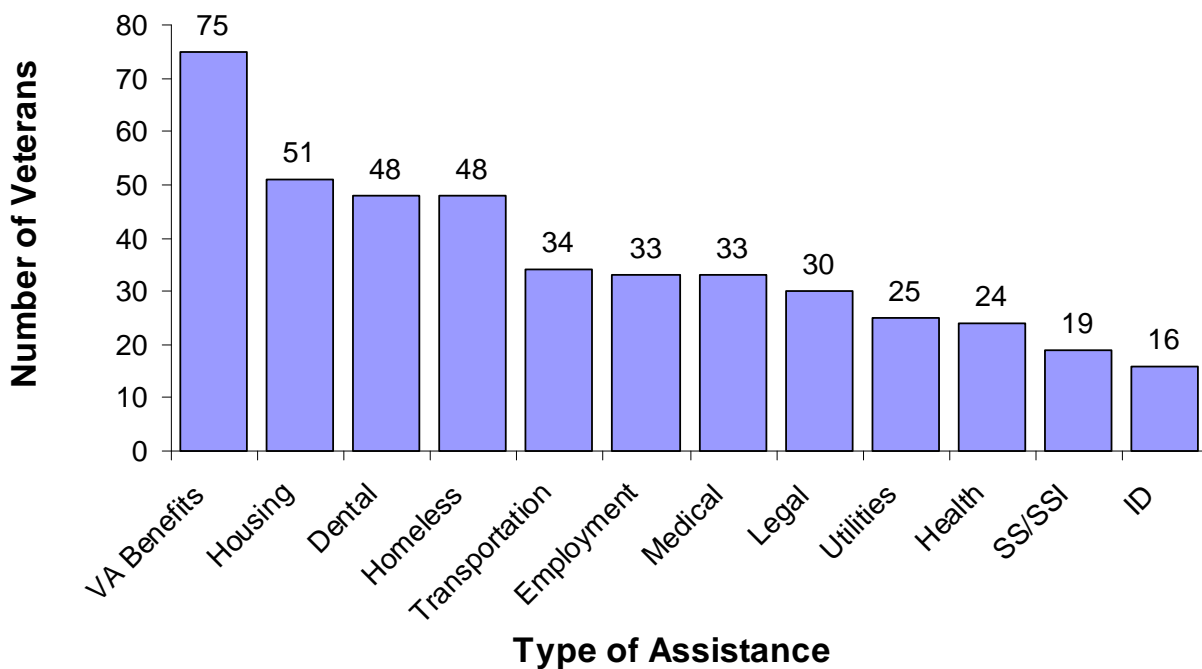


2010 Event – Veterans Stand Down

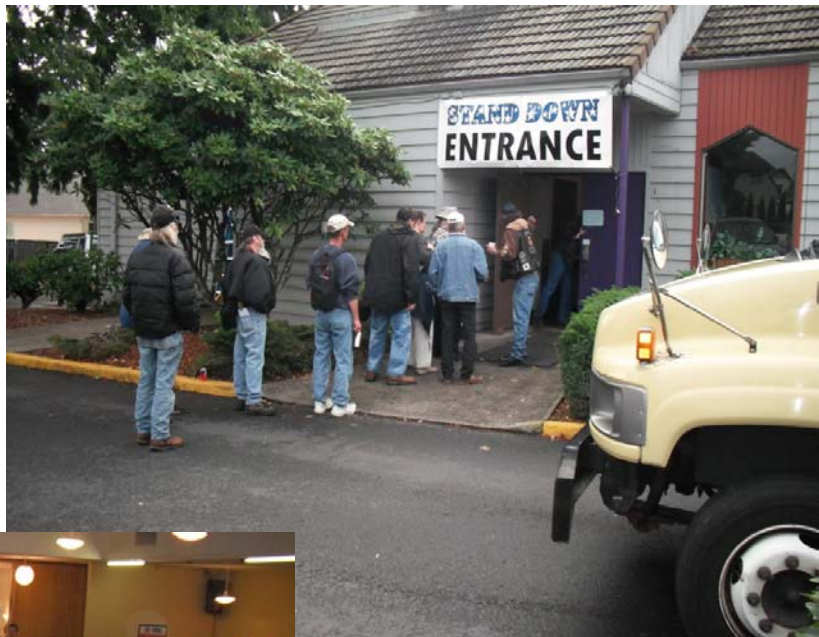
The annual Stand Down event was held on September 20, 2010 at the Elk's Club. **There were 190 veterans in attendance** who received information and services related to VA benefits, housing, dental, transportation, employment and medical.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ATTENDEES	
Male	85%
Female	15%
Clark County Resident	71%
Non Residents	19%
Number who identified as homeless or formerly homeless	69%

Veterans Served and Types of Assistance Sought at the Veterans Stand Down



2010 Event – Veterans Stand Down



Looking Ahead – 2011

Clark County continues to strive to meet the needs of its veteran's community. In 2010, the Veterans Resource Committee approved funding for two new innovative services that begin in 2011, a dental program and a Veterans Assistance Center.

Veterans Dental Program

Clark County began contracting with The Free Clinic of SW Washington on January 1, 2011 to provide a new veteran's dental program with volunteer dentists. In the first two months of service, the Free Clinic has provided dental care to veterans worth a value of over \$10,000. The total cost to the fund for these services was only \$2,121.

Clark County Veterans Assistance Center

Clark County has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Veterans Assistance Center nonprofit to provide funding for a drop-in center with counseling and referral services specifically for veterans. The Center began operating March 1, 2011.

While the Veterans Resource Committee has been seeing an increased demand for services and wants to serve as many eligible veterans as possible, it is mindful of the limited budget available and strives to select efficient programs and control costs.

Recognizing that the Veterans Assistance Fund is meant as an emergency relief fund, the policies for repeat users of the fund have been tightened up. Veterans who rely on the fund more than four or five times a year are required to complete an Individual Action Plan and follow through on goals and timelines they set for themselves before further emergency assistance from the fund is issued.

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Veterans Resource Committee Board

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